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ANNUAL REPORT

DEL NORTE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

1970-71

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COUNTY OF DEL NORTE

Planning Commission

COURTHOUSE

Crescent City, California 95531

J. R. HULBERT, Jr.
Chairman
DR. W. C. EICHNER
HOMER DALE
BENNY BEASLEY
GLENN SPENCER
S. ANDREW McBETH
WILLIAM HESS
Director

464-4133

October 5, 1971

Honorable Board of Supervisors
Courthouse
Crescent City, Calif.

Gentlemen:

The Del Norte County Planning Commission respectfully submits herewith its annual report for the year 1970-71 as required by the Planning Act of the State of California.

The Planning Commission wishes to thank your Honorable Board for all the assistance you have given and for the able assistance and suggestions offered by Mr. Harold Del Ponte as ex-officio member from the Board of Supervisors.

The Commission looks forward with appreciation to the continued support of the Board in matters pertaining to planning during the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

DEL NORTE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

J.R. Hulbert, Jr., Chairman

William L. Hess, Director of
Public Works

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COUNTY OF DEL NORTE

1970-71

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Thomas F. McNamara, First District
Chairman

Wallace V. Hight, Fourth District
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John E. Fraser, Third District
Harold Del Ponte, Fifth District

PLANNING COMMISSION

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Chairman

Dr. W.C. Eichner, Crescent City
Homer Dale, Crescent City
Benny Beasley, Fort Dick
S. Andrew McBeth, Klamath
Glenn Spencer, Smith River
Supervisor Harold Del Ponte, ex-officio
Joe Creisler, Sanitarian, ex-officio
William L. Hess, Director of Public Works

STAFF

William L. Hess, Director of Public Works
Cliff Niesen, Assistant
Dorothy Sinclair, Past Secretary
Mary L. Smith, Recording Secretary
Reta Smith, Corresponding Secretary
William W. Speer, County Counsel

OFFICE

Room 23, Courthouse, 450 "H" Street, Crescent City
Phone: 464-4133

MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held at 8:00 o'clock P.M. on the first and third Wednesday evening of each month in Room A, Courthouse, Crescent City, California.

B U D G E T

	Expended 1970-71	Allowed 1971-72
SALARIES:		
Permanent Employees	$3,687.00	$8,163.00
SERVICES & SUPPLIES:		
Memberships		75.00
Office Expense	818.06	600.00
Professional & Specialized Services	56.63	600.00
Publications & Legal Notices	156.48	500.00
Transportation & Travel	1,953.35	2,000.00
TOTAL SERVICES & SUPPLIES	$2,984.52	$3,775.00
Fixed Assets:	333.42	240.00
TOTAL BUDGET	$7,004.94	$12,178.00

G E N E R A L

Principal construction activity in the County of Del Norte during the fiscal year of 1970-71 centered around highway construction and the construction of the Klamath Glen Levee. A new stretch of divided freeway from Crescent City to the junction of Highways 101 and 199 was begun during the year by the State Division of Highways as well as a reconstruction project on State Highway 197 along North Bank Road. Several roads in the County road system were also improved. The construction of the Klamath Glen Levee is well underway and expected to be completed during October, 1971.

The National Park Service has completed several improvements within the Redwood National Park consisting of coastline trails and lookout points. A day use facility was also completed by the National Park near Endert's Beach, south of Crescent City.

There has been an increase in tourist traffic during the year and extensive use of the harbor facilities was made by tourists during the summer months.

Protection of water quality and pollution control was emphasized by the State toward the end of the year and an extensive study of local problems related to this subject will be one of the major projects for the ensuing year. Unless the County takes action on this problem to the satisfaction of the State, it is possible that the State would override the County in enforcing the State requirements.

California State legislation relating to beach and shoreline protection are of concern to the Planning Commission and precise zoning studies in the coastal area outside of the Redwood National Park are mandatory in order to prevent uncontrolled development and encroachment on the shoreline of Del Norte County. Here again the State has the authority to override the County if it does not take action to protect its own shoreline.

M E E T I N G S

In January of 1971 the Planning Commission recognized the need for more regular meetings and is now holding two regular meetings per month. Consequently, during the year there were 16 regular meetings. Three special meetings were held in order to review use permits where deadlines had to be met by contractors requiring permits for quarry operations.

Several work sessions were held with representatives of Daniel, Mann, Johnson, and Mendenhall to review and comment on the progress of the County General Plan.

G E N E R A L P L A N

Daniel, Mann, Johnson and Mendenhall, Planning Consultants for the Tri-Agency Planning Council* submitted a preliminary draft of the proposed General Plan during the early part of the year. Since that time there has been almost continuous and, very often, intensive efforts by the three agencies in editing, checking facts and statistics, and most importantly, making certain the final form of the General Plan is a reflection of local goals and desires tempered by the professional judgement of the Planning Consultants.

The review process should be completed and the General Plan adopted before the end of the calendar year. Some of the more critical questions yet to be resolved pertain to zoning requirements for the City, subdivision and mobilehome regulations for the County and site planning for the Harbor District. The berthing portion of the Harbor plan proposed by the Planning Consultants was not approved and therefore there is a significant gap in one of the most important elements of the plan.

* The members of the Tri-Agency Council are the Crescent City Harbor District, the City of Crescent City and the County of Del Norte.

O R G A N I Z A T I O N

A N D

B U D G E T

The planning staff has been reorganized. The Department of Public Works was created by ordinance and the title of Director of Planning was included within the title of Director of Public Works. Many of the planning activities formally handled by other offices have been consolidated and are now being managed by this newly created department.

All applications requiring approval of the Planning Commission are now processed through the Department of Public Works. In addition, this department now prepares and distributes the agenda and the minutes of Planning Commission meetings. Much more work is now involved in the approval of lot splits, trailer use permits, quarry permits and in fact all the business of the Planning Commission. The extra work is partly a result of State and Federal regulations, increasing construction activity and intense concern for the development of the community.

The concentration of duties as well as an increased workload demanded the addition of a man to handle the planning work. Consequently, the budget was increased to allow for the addition of staff. Except for the extra salary very little was changed in the budget from previous years.

Z O N I N G

There were three areas in the County which were rezoned during the fiscal year. The first was a portion of the Hunter Valley Subdivision which was rezoned from R-1 and R-2 to T zone to allow more space for individual trailer lots. The areas changed were undeveloped and involved no existing buildings. The second rezoning near Highway 101 and Elk Valley Road was approved to enlarge a C-3 zone into a portion of an R-2 zone which would permit the applicant to utilize his R-2 property for a business compatible with the C-3 zoning. The third rezoning was adjacent to a change in routing of Highway 197 at the request of two property owners whose properties crossed the existing road thereby enlarging the existing FR zoning in order to adjust to the new highway routing.

Flooding conditions on the Smith River is a threat to homesites. Consequently, land use along the Smith River flood plain should be subject to flood plain zoning. It is recommended that flood plain zoning be established along the Smith River based on recommendations of the Corps of Engineers..

Open space zoning should be developed to protect scenic areas, watershed patterns and beach and shoreline accesses.

L O T S P L I T S A N D S U B D I V I S I O N S

Fifteen lot splits were processed during 1970-71 all of which were approved. In compliance with the State Map Act, all lot splits have been placed on parcel maps and recorded.

There were no new subdivisions proposed during the year. A subdivision along the coast north of Crescent City was discussed at the end of the prior fiscal year but a tentative map was never submitted.

A general updating of the County ordinances regarding lot splits and subdivisions is under way and scheduled for completion during the next fiscal year.

In an effort to comply with State Water Quality Control requirements, a study of minimum lot sizes for septic tank use has been authorized. Our present lot sizes of 7200 sq. ft. and 12,000 sq. ft. are felt to be inadequate in most areas. The study is now in progress.

In an effort to update those subdivisions which were created years ago without benefit of improvements or roads, the Commission is now requiring certain improvements to the roadways as part of the land use permit for parcels not located on improved roads. This is a new policy and as yet it is too early to notice the affect of these requirements. More definite policy will have to be established.

R E C R E A T I O N

Improvements in the harbor, improved trails, lookout points, and day use areas in the Redwood National Park are some of the recreation improvements in the County. A new private trailer park was established in Klamath and a new trailer park was approved for construction on the beach in Crescent City.

The development of Keller Park is in the advanced planning stages and the Recreation and Parks Department has engaged a professional landscape architect to complete plans for the park. The traffic pattern has been established and clearing is now in progress to prepare the ground for the construction of all facilities within the park. The physical improvements will be developed in a rustic style using natural local materials to enhance the innate beauty of the park.

A Federal grant has been authorized for the development and enlargement of Clifford Kamph Park. Preliminary plans showing additional picnic areas were submitted to the State with the application. Parking facilities for trailers and campers for day use also are considered for development. The enlarged area proposed for the park is designed to include the rock formation located immediately south of the existing park and development will take advantage of the creek through the area.

T R A I L E R S

Use permits for 95 trailers were processed of which 94 were approved and one was denied. Use permits for two "one trailer" trailer parks were also approved. One commercial trailer park was constructed at the Klamath River in the FP-1 zone for which a use permit was not required.

It is notable that in Del Norte County, approximately 1/3 of the population in the unincorporated area of the County now lives in trailers. As a result, the tax base of the County is suffering since by the trailer tax structure an older trailer pays less taxes each year until after 10 years when there is no tax revenue. This should be equalized with other residential values.

Q U A R R Y O P E R A T I O N S

The mining of rock and the manufacture of rock products such as concrete and asphalt products has been a matter of major interest during the past year.

There are very few sources of good quality rock presently developed in Del Norte County other than the stream beds of both the Smith River and the Klamath River. As a result, the streams are constantly mined, causing concern about the affect on aquatic life and the course of the water channels during winter storms.

A comprehensive zoning study is proposed to deal directly with stream bed quarries. Guidelines will be established which would indicate the specific areas which can be mined. Consideration will be given to the typical zoning concerns, that is, compatible land uses, as well as the affect of the quarry operation on the river and its aquatic life.

Quarries on sites other than river bars should be permitted only where the operation will not deface ocean headlands and scenic areas. Where the quarrying is for land clearing, it should be completely cleared and graded in a single operation.

It is recommended that a study be made and ordinances be established within the very near future, to control the taking of rock from the river beds. Dry land quarry sites should be established in areas which are away from the common, easy access, scenic areas of the County, and such sites should be made available to those wishing to quarry rock on a commercial scale.

U S E P E R M I T S

Twenty-one use permits were processed during the year and were issued in the follcwing categories.

Rock Quarries	11	Earth Removal	1
Trailer Parks	2	Electric Shop	1
Pet Shop & Zoo	1	Home Occupation	2
Shake Mill	1	Boat Shed	1
Church	1		

The large number of use permits for rock quarries and earth removal is due to the number of road projects and the Klamath Glen Levee.

R O A D S

Two State Highway projects were started during the past year, one on Highway 101 and one on Highway 197.

The Highway 101 project is the construction of a five mile length of four lane divided freeway from Crescent City city limits to the entrance into Jedediah Smith State Park. The southerly three miles of State Highway 197 (North Bank Road) is presently under construction for realignment and widening.

Of considerable importance to the community were the public hearings held to consider the Highway 199 realignment between Highway 101 and Highway 197. The issue revolves around the degree of protection from highway traffic that is required to protect what will be part of the Redwood National Park. The matter is still under discussion and irrevocable committments are not yet established. Obviously, future development and planning in the northern portion of the County will be vitally affected no matter what the final decisions and actions are concerning this section of Highway 199.

County roads which have been rebuilt and improved include five major projects. A 2.5 mile length of Lake Earl Drive from Elk Valley Cross Road to Bachelor Road was realigned and widened. Old Mill Road from Northcrest Drive to Dillman Road was realigned and widened. Pebble Beach Drive was repaired from Crescent City city limits to Hemlock Avenue. Mill Creek Road was realigned and widened from South Fork Road to Sheep Pen Creek. Sections of South Fork Road were paved.

A covered bridge over Sheep Pen Creek is in the planning stage. The construction of this bridge will eliminate the existing narrow bridge and provide two way traffic along the entire length of Mill Creek Road.

PLANS FOR 1971-72

1. Prepare County-wide airport master plan.
2. Prepare new land use and zoning maps.
3. Complete base maps for planning studies.
4. Revise Subdivision Ordinance.
5. Revise Lot Split Ordinance.
6. Revise Lot Sizes in the Zoning Ordinance.
7. Revise use permit requirements for mobilehomes.
8. Conduct Sewage Study for densely populated areas.
9. Prepare program for better control of mining of sand and gravel on river bars.
10. Coordinate General Plan preparation with D.M.J.M.
11. Prepare second phase of Housing Element.
12. Study Open Space Zoning.
13. Rezone areas not properly zoned.
14. Continue cooperation with other City, County and State agencies with regards to planning.

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IN CONCLUSION

Water quality protection and shoreline protection are currently the priority items facing County planning.

By means of enacting new ordinances or amending existing ordinances to protect these environmental qualities we can prevent inappropriate development. The goal now is to protect the water quality by preventing overcrowding of individual sewage systems and individual water supplies. Proper zoning and development controls will protect the ocean beaches, streams, and river beds from encroachment be overdevelopment and excess use.

The control of the use of gravel bars in the river and stream beds is in need of a good overall plan whereby quarry operations can be regulated by location and size of gravel bar to be mined.

And, in addition, efforts must be made to protect the scenic quality in the areas of the County most apparent to the motor tourist. Unless our County is made attractive to those who view it from the automobile or camper we will be discouraging the most potential source of economic development. After all, most tourists visit only by automobile. They never have the opportunity to enjoy the more remote and pristine areas of the community. Everyone should agree we attract visitors by the natural beauty of our area, not by overcrowded signs and strip commercial development which only smack of how to gouge the visitor. Our local commercial and industrial needs can and should be met without destroying the very setting which makes Del Norte County such a desirable place to live and visit.

The efforts in the coming years will be aimed at excellence of development with the secure knowledge that high standards will insure a steady and continuous growth of our economic base and protect our quality of life.

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